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CIA's duty is to lie, former agent claims

By Dina Kyriakidou

The CIA initiates the fall of foreign governments, millions of deaths, wars and hundreds of other covert actions each year, said a former CIA official who quit the organization after 13 years of service.

In a speech to more than 600 people at UCSB Wednesday night, John Stockwell said the language used by the CIA never implies the reality of their actions. "The biggest spy organization in the world never uses the word 'spy,'" he said.

"The responsibility of the CIA is to keep the world unstable. The reason is that we make so much money. Our economy is so dependent on the production of arms," Stockwell said.

He worked for the agency in several roles: Field officer in Vietnam, chief of station in Africa, commander of the Angola task force and adviser to the National Security Council.

"We never issued a statement that was true. We lied to Congress," Stockwell said. He explained that the official name for mercenaries was "foreign military technicians" and prostitutes assigned to get information from foreign officials were called "special access agents."

The CIA has trained torturers and assassins, made 13 attempts to kill Fidel Castro, backed the fall of the Chilean government in 1964 and caused the death of President Salvador Allende, Stockwell said.

He said he was sued by the CIA for breach of contract (revealing secrets) and was put under a court order requiring that any future writings about the government be submitted to the CIA for approval.

Stockwell has written two books, one ("In Search of Enemies") of which was a national best seller. He has appeared on television shows such as "60 Minutes" and "Good Morning America."

Covert actions are not limited abroad, he said. Before the Vietnam war, "400 journalists were working with the CIA to introduce its propaganda stories about Vietnam." Agents have infiltrated the media to create public opinion that will favor the foreign policy and accept the funding for military activities, he said.

"The greatest con of all is the use of patriotism to induce the young men to go and participate and fight and kill and be killed in these things," he said.

Since he left the CIA in 1976, he has been writing, lecturing at American

universities and travelling to Central America to find out more about CIA actions there, he said.

The lecture in Campbell Hall was interrupted by a telephoned bomb threat. The building was evacuated and the lecture was moved to Storke Plaza. UCSB Police officers and the Sheriff's Department canine unit searched the premises but found no bomb, Lt. John McPherson of the UCSB Police Department said. The matter is under investigation, he said.

(Dina Kyriakidou is a News-Press journalism intern from UCSB.)